

Joint Subgroup on Equity—Meeting Minutes

October 20, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Webex

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFcQ-R_JnSo

Meeting Attendees:

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran

Commissioner Jewel Bronaugh (VDACS)

Michael Carter, Jr. (VSU Small Farm Outreach Program and farmer)

Jenn Michelle Pedini (Virginia NORML)

Kristin Collins (Tax Department)

Ngiste Abebe (Columbia Care)

Nate Green (Va. Assn of Commonwealth's Attorneys)

Annette Kelley (BOP), on behalf of Caroline Juran

Colby Ferguson (DMV), on behalf of Commissioner Richard Holcomb

Travis Hill (ABC)

Linda Jackson (DFS)

Richard Boyd (VSP)

John Welch (VSP)

Staff:

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Brad Copenhaver

Guest Speaker: Toi Hutchinson, Illinois Cannabis Regulation Oversight Officer

Toi Hutchinson spoke on the successes and emerging lessons learned in facilitating an equity centric transition to adult use cannabis in Illinois.

There is a lot of interest in Illinois. Still in the process of trying to get it all done. Right after licensure is the fight that happens right after licensure. We've seen those fights play out without equity principles built in and because Illinois has equity built in the response can feel a little more visceral.

Toi noted the last time she was in Virginia was for 400 anniversary for the first legislative session in Jamestown while she was president NCSL.

In 2016 they started with decriminalization and before that they had a small, narrowly drawn medical pilot where they were fingerprinting patients. At that time the cannabis conversation was from a standpoint of this is all illegal. That's how we talked about it and people who used it.

In 2020 it is now the policy of the state that you cannot normalize and legalize an activity for whom the prohibition of the same activity destroyed whole communities and generations. That is fundamental of what we do. Usage is the same across demographics.

When Toi hears people talk about the cannabis industry's bright future from a business perspective—even though it's in a “green space” where it's still illegal federally—she always point outs there are people legally making millions and billions of dollars (Illinois tapped 100 million in only 8 months of legalization) while 800,000 people are arrested every year across the country, even in legal states.

When you understand that and embed that in what you try to do, it makes the hard questions palatable. She describes at is knowing what your ‘why’ is. She describes hers in three prongs:

Equity – Taking the population that was harmed the most and trying to make that population whole

Diversity & Inclusion –We want the participants to look like the community

The cannabis industry globally is a majority rich white males. Usage is the same across demographics but only Black and brown communities have been systemically overpoliced and targeted for us. It is important to deal with the barriers to entry like previous convictions.

They designed equity as race neutral as possible by tying it to the population for the nexus of who it was for. Nationally speaking, the community most harmed by the war on drugs is 55% Black, 24% Latinx. People are allowed to sell metric tons of what would once lock you up.

Access to capital was the number one barrier. Can't use regular financial tools because of the schedule 1 status at a federal level. People were able to buy themselves into the process. Their licensure process is based on people who did not have this ability.

What to do with the money?

You cannot have racial justice without economic justice. Whenever anything connected to the plant is purchased, 25% is put in R3 Reinvestment Program to invest in community that was hardest hit by war on drugs

How do you undo past harms? They identified records to be expunged and/or pardoned while they were legalizing.

She explained that Illinois did the flip the switch model. All existing medical operators in Illinois before legalization were granted ability to flip to adult use. It allowed them to create industry they could study.

They stated studied every ballot initiative and every time an equity program we went to court and charted what knocked the programs down. They learned when you make race specific it was struck by the Supreme Court. They decided to make something race neutral that would help audience It was not popular in the stakeholder, activist and DEI community.

The law went live in January right before COVID-19 hit and they were unsure of how it would impact sales. There has been no time to decide if it has been working or not.

She shared anecdote of a husband, activist and father who won multiple awards for human rights work who had felony charges from when he was young and for the first time is no longer a felon.

It's not just about legally being able to buying gummies, it is; criminal justice reform, drug policy reform and a case study in how to reinvest communities in thoughtful and intentional way. In the midst of horrible global pandemic it's time to see things differently because when you know better you do better.

Drug policies don't keep people safe and we need to change the paradigm. Whole generations have been thrown away.

The initial operators were charged licensure fees to fund a \$31 million revolving loan program which is targeted to equity applicants to start their business because there are traditional financial tools accessible for the cannabis business. Once you remove the barriers to applying you have to create conditions for people to compete.

Before they even got equity applicants out they got existing operators, they sell products the taxes going into the fund to help communities hardest hit while they are systemically going through records for pardons county by county. Their timeline is in 5 years to get through seven hundred seven thousand records.

Because we created social equity criteria that was race neutral—meaning anyone who lived in these area or had criminal justice experiences could qualify.

1. Do you live in a disproportionately impacted area?
2. Do you have an arrest or conviction for a marijuana related offense?
3. Does someone in your immediate family have an arrest or conviction for a marijuana related offense?

She noted every pillar of what we do begins with an equity question. There isn't a specific equity job, every job is an equity job. It is embedded in the decisions and in the law.

It's generational and landmark and mind shifting. New way to look at what people have seen as bad. Cannabis use in media is joke fodder unless, it's black and brown communities and then it is about crime. Part of this is an understanding and recognition of the hypocrisy and stigma around the plant and changes that perspective to rebuilding community.

We are at the at the precipice of doing some amazing things and figuring out all kinds of cancer research, it's impact on epileptic seizures, ADD, PTSD and chronic pain. It is very exciting.

This is criminal justice reform, drug policy reform and a case study reinvesting in communities.

She reiterated that not everyone will be happy, people will feel strongly about it. Social services is very interested in the money and community reinvestment. Criminal justice will always want more and the legislative process is a result of negotiations. You won't be able to dismantle 80 years of failed drug policy with one bill, you have to start so that as you keep building so every year gets better.

Illinois built in pause to assess what worked and fix what didn't.

Question from Ngiste Abebe: Can you expand on the timeline from first sale to the disparity study?

Hutchinson: The people who wanted us to be race specific, we had to explain the way we could make race based policy prescriptions is only after a disparity study. You can't study an industry that doesn't exist. The medical and adult use industries are not the same and you can't fix what you can't see.

They let out 75 licenses first so they could identify if they were successful in relieving barriers. 97% of all applicants qualified as social equity applicant and over 60% qualified on prong one— 51% ownership by person of color living in DIA or had personal conviction for marijuana related offense. There were 4,518 applications for 75 licenses.

After 75 licenses went out they put a hard lid on the market and did a disparity study to see if the law did what they intended it to do. This was the first built in pause.

The last part they need is if they actually issued any equity license into the industry.

This is a multi-year, multi-phase effort. They passed the bill in May, the law went live in January, applications got turned in, and they break records every month and finally get to the point to issue licenses. In the background money is going into the reinvestment fund and they are methodically working on expunging of criminal records at the same time.

The public will always be looking at who is getting the license. Part of it is managing their expectations and getting them to understand it's not going to be fixed this one time.

This is a 5 year lookout. She tells everyone success was not January 1, 2020, success is what the industry looks like when we have a mature industry.

Annette Kelley: How many medical dispensaries did you have when you flipped that switch to allow them to go to adult use?

Toi Hutchinson: 55. Would have had 110 if everyone applied for their second license. With 110 spoken and a cap of 500 and the 75 cap, we have 315 more before we give away everything. Along with the disparity study we also may need to do another demand study.

Annette Kelley: How long did the medical programs have to make the switch?

Toi Hutchinson: Some knew the bill would be live in January and began scaling up for the January launch. We also built in prioritization for medical patients. That is another balancing act. Some scaled up before January start date and some are doing it now.

Annette Kelley: I'd like to hear more about how you handled medical cannabis patients with adult use. Maybe we can catch up later about that.

Toi Hutchinson: Yes. We still struggle with that but we have the protections of it embedded in the statute. Happy to speak more offline.

Toi concluded by saying that the premise is that you are normalizing and legalizing activity that the prohibition of the same activity caused untold amounts of damage. You are only limited by how creative you can be.

Guest Speaker: Amber Littlejohn, Executive Director, Minority Cannabis Business Association

When it comes to looking at implementation and looking down the road it provides some perspective and developing the broadest definition of equity.

MCBA wants to create a space for equity to be everywhere and in everyone's mind.

They have 4 pillars:

Equitable Communities
Equitable Industry
Equitable Access
Equitable Justice

For this discussion she is going to focus on equitable communities and industries. Classically when talking about equity at the state level you are going to be hearing about equitable industry and making sure we are creating diverse cannabis reflective of communities.

We also think of restorative justice. The equitable justice aspect and expungements.

The two pieces that are getting more traction are going to be the community reinvestment and the equitable communities piece. These are the keys for the state of Virginia. When dealing with

communities where many of the impactful voices in Black and Latinx communities are socially conservative and have fears and concerns.

It becomes important for non-Californian, non-heavily progressive state be mindful of the communities you are trying to impact. We like to lead with community. She was told by the head of a civil right rights organization's chapter they don't care about diversity and inclusion in the cannabis industry but do care more how it will impact the community.

We have seen locally and at the state level that you can't go back and ask an exorbitantly taxed industry for more tax revenue; it has to be built in at the outset. They like to see a certain portion of revenues set aside. We want to strike balance between helping cannabis industry build up state economies through revenue and also have protected revenues.

She thinks you strike the balance by targeting reinvestment dollars broadly and in addition to whatever support is needed for the social equity programs that we're look at where these communities are the most impacted and addressing those; substance abuse disorders, health disparities, economic opportunities, job training, job development

Looking at being the most impactful with those dollars and trying to direct those funds where the state needs them anyway and are ultimate wins and community builders for not just how it impacts cannabis but moving into broader community.

The next piece of this is addressed on the ground. Who is going to be entering the industry? Who do we want as stewards? Who do we want to have the privilege of doing business in this community?

And whether that be the state or local. Getting to that we want to promote community reinvestment agreements and so we want these community investment to be meaningful, substantial, to address externalities, encourage the adequate and proper regulation. We want to cover everything from a direct community impact as far as the industry goes. The way to make these work is to have an incentive for people to create a meaningful program. That is priority of licensing or number of licensing. We want there to be meaningful incentives to create these community benefits agreements.

One of the place we look to as we develop our policy is the federal community reinvestment act. It's a bill that recognized banks were not being great stewards. And now for the privilege for these additional license there is an oversight process. We want to see these community benefits agreements subject ongoing input from the community.

Moving to equitable industries: If equity is going to be the cornerstone of state legislation, we have to make sure at outset of the program there is a strong state social equity program in place. In states where that doesn't exist is a nightmare. The challenges in Illinois pale compare to a state like California that had minimal social equity.

What we have are municipalities that are unable to create meaningful change across the state. You have programs being subject to the whims of local government. Because we are dealing with criminal justice there has to be policy across the state. Potentially incentivizing participation in at least certain elements of social equity program. For example, looking at or collecting data on arrests and criminal justice

Participating in pulling of a collection of data of enforcement actions on traditional market, vehicle stops and simple possession. We want to gather that data. If people are getting funds to enrich their communities we want buy in to social equity program. We want to make sure within those communities the policies around criminal justice extend to everyone.

She moved on to regulation. This is somewhere where they can be most impactful.

Despite Virginia's political diversity, addressing some of the issues of equity in regulatory framework will be a powerful tool. She said she can talk to libertarian and ultra conservative and when we talk barriers of industry and regulatory frameworks they find a lot of unity.

MBCA does not just represent business owners but their community as well. We come from an industry that was under regulated and we've watched the journey to good place of self-regulation and promoting of funding oversight agencies. We want to make sure whatever policies are in place are not creating a situation where we are disproportionately impacting a community that is already disproportionately impacted. At MBCA we look at marketing and labeling and making sure our communities are protected there. We look to the industry to self-regulate. We have enough information on what we can do and should be doing from other regulated industry that we know what we need.

On the other side regulations can be a barrier to entry if they are overregulated. Creating tiers to compliance, like at the federal level, creates unique burdens. It is a byzantine regulatory framework on the best day and navigating it as a small business up can be difficult The RFA at the federal level provides requirement that the state provides compliant support. Very few people want to skirt the law, it's a matter of resources and education. She implored any support that can exists there.

She noted that Ms. Hutchinson previously discussed the barriers to entry and the challenges for people of color in the industry. She agreed access to capital is an issue-- they've been working on this in a federal level. The reality is we are seeing consequences to lack of capital around the country.

If you have a license but no money someone will lend the money in exchange for rights of management, forced sale clause and IP rights. If we are truly identifying people most impacted by war on drugs or people in rural communities impacted by substance and criminal justice we have to support that person into becoming a business owner ?

MCBA is taking a look at the property rights bundle of sticks. If the traditional ownership model is yielding few ownership rights we want to do something else.

One of the key suggestions they make is creating direct resources to support minority business owner. They can't put the burden entirely on state.

She said MCVA has state model policy that they are currently updating and expect to have it up by end of the year.

Michael Carter: I am a member of MCBA. What do you see as the standard for social equity taxes or contribution for tax money? What is the average those social equity funds usually receive?

Amber Littlejohn: Clarified if meant social equity for license/ operator program or the general community reinvestment.

Michael Carter: Community reinvestment

Amber Littlejohn: We like a healthy chunk off the top. Minimum of 25% because that money can be put to uses that would otherwise be general fund uses. For instance in CA , they are supporting daycare for low income children. We want to make sure that money is directed to communities that is ultimately pay dividends for the state.

Nicky Zamostny: Can you talk more about the model policy that you are going to be working on and the different components of that.

AL: Our first model policy came out in 2017 and we now have the ability to take what has worked and not works to try and reshape that policy. We cover everywhere that policy and equity meet within the 4 pillars, access, industry, community and justice. We are going to focus heavily on criminal justice and automatic expungement. Renewed focus on oversight that is set up in a way that there is comment and engagement with public that meets people where they are. They will focus on collecting data. They will focus on what the industry itself look like. What is going to be the breakdown. How and if we limit the market and what kind of oversight are we going to provide as a state when it comes to creating different business silos. Creating policy and education around investments and management and partnership agreements.

Brad Copenhaver: You talked about under regulating vs. overregulating and mentioned packaging and labeling as one of those topics. Can you expand on that?

AL: As we have seen with another product that is centered in the state of Virginia, we don't want to see targeting of urban youth and communities. If you see what I see in California. We've seen very urban centric marketing and we want to make sure that issue is addressed. We want to look

at THC content and make sure the set limits are sensible to treat someone with terminal cancer but we aren't having young men with propensity for PTSD using those products and putting themselves in compromising position. We don't want marketing to children or pregnant women.

We're seeing this in CBD hemp, bad actors and fringe actors come in and create tainted products. They put the community in danger and reflects poorly on industry. There is a proliferation of drug tainted dietary products in communities of color.

We want to make sure we are looking at some of those lessons from dietary supplements and CBD hemp industry and being able to control the fringe purveyors that don't have the standard of quality. We don't want the public exposed to risk and harm and have it all fall apart.

She concluded her presentation and welcomed the subgroup members to reach out to keep conversation going.

Group Discussion

Brad: I suggest that we put our discussion in a few buckets in terms of what we've heard and spend a few minutes talking about potential recommendation from presentations.

Bucket 1: Licensure.

Bucket 2: Access to Capital

Bucket 3: Expungement and Restoration of Rights

Bucket 4: Community Reinvestment

Bucket 5: Regulatory Environment

Licensing:

Brad: Interested to hear from workgroup about licensing. Fascinated to hear Illinois started with 75 license, going to study and report back. We heard Steve Hoffman from MA talking about how their equity program roll out was bumpier and now they are considering different types of licenses to go to different folks to answer equity question. Interested in hearing what we've heard, what has worked well, what is a path we'd like to work with in terms of licensing.

Catie Finley: One question in my mind is even before you get to 75 licenses, is Annette's question of how you handle the medical cannabis licensure processors that are already here.

Ngiste: It was very interesting to hear the explanation for how Illinois had modeled. Struck by both how they used the medical program for early funds and how the initial round of funding to help both the capital investment and official regulatory requirements for some of that.

I hadn't realized all of the demands study they had done and the purposeful decision to issue 75 dispensary license and there are additional caps for cultivation and infuser license. In the

cultivation space the license ensures all future growers will be social equity qualifying because it created just a micro grow license with the ability to expand and reduced the capital required to get a license to make it easier to acquire and start a business.

Cultivation, infuser, dispensary and distributor where the first issued. It struck me as fast and deliberate. Six months timeline was between signing the law and first day of adult use sales and I know many of the companies paying the fee in order to get additional license. In the 6 month window you are so limited because there is more demand than existing operators could meet. Different dispensaries had purchase limits and other policies in place to extend the supply and there is a bit of a challenge around some of the supply. Sudden increase in demand once that switches from July 1 2020.

We are 9 months away from that initial conversation. \$100 million in sales that have happened. I think a combination of fast and deliberate was important. If there is too much of a lag time you can see the illicit market grow. Leads to more illicit cannabis arrest disparities. Making sure speedy transition so we don't have illicit actors or unattended consequences. We're choosing between which set of risk factors we want to have.

The Illinois vs Virginia program will be something for us to keep discussing. Illinois has a population of 13 million and 55 original dispensaries. We have pop of 8 million and if there was regulatory certainty we would have at most 30 dispensaries. Roughly about 250,000 residents per dispensing location.

Jewel Bronaugh: You spoke on dispensary, cultivator, and infuser license. How does that sit aside retail extraction license?

Ngiste: There are multiple terms used for different. Cultivation is a grow facility and included in that is also that ability to infuse, process and create products not just grow products. Infuser is ability to purchase raw product and create refined product. Dispensary is the ability to have a reach location to sell the products. Transportation and distribution are the ability to transport between any types of facilities. The delivery last mile.

Brad: It was covered well how you build out a social equity license program without kind of being race specific. Something that makes sure that you are equitable treating the community disproportionately impacted but not specifically saying which community in the law. I'd be interested to hear from the group about how we would recommend VA create a social equity license structure and what kind of criteria do you think we would need to consider?

Michael: Very interested to know the race neutral aspect because that will be in issue with our House of Delegates and Senate. Advise getting a lot of advisory from papers they've written or resources they've utilized. Race neutral is new to me but viable approach.

Ngiste dropped a link to the Adult Use Social Equity Program definitions into the meeting. There are two tiers:

51% or more ownership person from disproportionately impacted area.

Someone who has been, arrested, adjudicated or convicted of cannabis offenses eligible for expungement

Had parent or child has been arrested, adjudicated or convicted of cannabis offenses eligible for expungement

10 or more fulltime employees and more than half meet above criteria.

When you look at the map, the one issue is how do you account for gentrification or people who have been displaced? In IL there is additional requirements of if you have had to live 5 of the last 10 years in those spaces to account for gentrification. One of the issues is being able to prove they lived in one of those space. Something to consider.

Brad: More thoughts?

Ngiste: Make room for innovation. It might not be something for 2021 but in the longer run. How do you create space for creativity and innovation? For example, permits for private caterer serve a cannabis infused meal.

Brad: Access to capital. We've heard economic and social equity go hand in hand and you can't have social equity without economic equity and access to capital is a big part of that. Topics: a state supported revolving loan or grant program. Ways to engage private equity or private debt to provide capital. That is a big challenging topic. Thoughts?

Ngiste: I've seen in international affairs work US runs the development credit authority and without spending foreign aid funds we were able to provide extra layer of insurance to encourage other lenders to loan money to micro financiers who wouldn't fit into risk profit. Encourage VA financial intuitions who might be otherwise concerned.

Jewel: I remember one or two states did small business training. They will need that technical assistance and training and maybe some small business development training and technical assistance.

Travis Hill: Access to capital will depend on how you build your regulatory structure what you have in place and be aware of barriers created by regulations. Make sure don't create something only well-funded can access. Loan guarantees interesting. In agriculture there were conversations about backing shipments overseas. We have to figure out how to get capital in folks' hands without creating barriers.

NA: I'm sure there are other examples in agriculture of second tier levels of insurance. Licenses and access to capital intersect to make it accessible but not too accessible. In Oklahoma they had an easy app process for medical dispensary and there are 4,000 medical dispensary license in the state of OK.

Having a license doesn't make it easier for you to access investors and access capitals. Having limited releases allows for a program to grow thoughtfully and intentionally. Every calendar year you can make improvements before it has become too hard to correct.

Brad: The next topic is expungement and restoration of rights. States that are moving forward with legalization this is something top on the list in terms of equity.

Michael: I'd be curious of OAG opinion on approach, manpower needs and the amount of cases in Virginia. How far will they go back? 20, 30, 40 years?

Holli: I can't speak for the whole office but expungements work on a petition basis. The only expungements that are available is if the charge was nullified or wrongful conviction. There are bills to change that. One deals with automatic expungement. Manpower is a challenge for state police who conduct all expungement.

Brian Moran: The two bills that had an automatic expungement provision and one that continues the petition basis were unable to reconcile their difference. That issue will continues to be debated in session.

With respect to marijuana specifically, the bill included a sealing provision. Sealing and expungement are used interchangeably in some state but are very different. Expungement eliminates the record and sealing is more of a technological and public cannot access. That came affective July 1. There has been some progress in sealing prior marijuana convictions and that discussion will continue.

Nathan: VA could use destroying like a traffic record. If it is expunged it stays in clerk's office, the manpower for clerks is incredibly large in expungement. Prosecutors and defense attorneys tried to put together a bill that put together a bill accelerating when drugs and alcohol offenses fall off record. In terms of licensure, expungement is complicated. Easier to get rid of barriers by having a felony record.

NA: My understanding i IL faced the same challenge around auto expungement. In NY they passed auto-expungement but already had highly automated electronic record. My understanding is in VA there are disparate level of systems. Cook County, IL pursued a public private partnership with Code for American to facilitate auto-expungement process. I think of Code VA in Jackson Ward.

I would highly recommend if we go that route and the fiscal pressures on the state, Code for American has a good track record for working with state government.

NG: Did I hear Illinois working off pardons? That is different legal component. They must have something that allows the DA to pardon.

Nour Alamiri: Appreciate conversation about righting those wrongs and expunging past conventions. Also need to ensure these law enforcement mechanisms do not continue to impact communities disproportionately. Need to make sure the path forward is not further exacerbating past issues.

Kristen Howard: There are bills this session about secondary offenses and law enforcement not being able to pull people over for minor traffic offense or odor of marijuana.

Nour Alamiri: In the health impact sub group meeting we discussed public assisted house and communities where use would be prohibited. Make sure there is not more policing in those areas.

Brad Copenhaver: Last thoughts on community reinvestment and regulation?

Ngiste Abebe: I understand the Illinois model is based off issuing of grants. They put together Board of Appointees who oversees it and then there is 25 million in funds but it relies on grants that are submitted by community groups and community members meets the core data sets for disproportionately impacted areas. That dual level of citizen participating and oversight is important part of implementation.

Nour Alamari: We talked in health subgroup we discussed the importance of hearing from the community members themselves and identify what they see as community reinvestment. There are a lot of organizations already doing a good job of revitalizing communities and enhancing social services to marginalized /vulnerable population. We can provide opportunity for those groups to apply for support would be beneficial.

Public Comment

Paul McLean, Virginia Minority Cannabis Coalition—in regards to the conversion around expungement. Having listened to the call, I understand the cost is exorbitant because of the manpower. But because of the public shame and embarrassment that an individual goes through involved with an arrest I would hope that when this process is hashed out that this there is some public recognition, giving that person the opportunity to experience the positive side now that it will be legal.

Access to capital was mentioned numerous times. Several times the idea of what it is going to cost to do the social equity components--seemed like there was a lot of concerns. I briefly heard the utilization of private capital could be used but I also heard concerns about. It would be great

to see state put a framework in place or third party access to allow that to happen. If it requires private capital in order for VA to do thing right on the social equity of this industry, I think people would be willing to tie their money to do what is right to right the wrongs.

Tamera Netzel—I wasn't going to speak today but then I heard Ms. Hutchinson say we need to see things differently to do things differently. I am a medical cannabis patient in VA, a retired teacher and photographer. After I became a medical cannabis patient I heard the criminalization stories and was compelled to tell these stories. I want to point out a resource. I created a nonprofit called Cruel Consequence, you can find us at scrueconsequences.org. We have had a lot of talk about what will happen in Virginia and we've have had speakers for out of state. But if you are looking for real world examples of Virginias we have them. We have personal stories of people who have been harmed in marijuana prohibition. One in particular is CPS. There is a gentleman in our project who is still harassed by CPS after getting his medical cannabis card. Apparently, you can be either a parent of Virginia cannabis patient and you cannot be both. There is something wrong with that.

Leroy Hardy—Michael Carter Jr. has been keeping us updated but I wanted to make sure that everyone is aware that during the research phase of the industrial hemp program there was no minority participation. Even though we sought to be apart we were not included and that gave growers a jump on all of us that are now trying to learn how to grow.

As the medical program was rolled out, we were not a part of that. As a 5th generation family operated farm I would like to make that part of the public record. We are looking to you help catch us up and make sure we are part of this industry.

As I can see hemp that has been grown for about 5 seasons we're just starting to see out 2nd season and there is a learning curb. But if hemp is to be grown in VA as it has been in the past by people that look like me and famers that are like us; small, family owned, generationally land owners were are looking to your all level the playing field and make sure we are continually not left out and left behind.

Jenn Michele Pedini adjourned the meeting at 4:58 PM.